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Address: ...

Evils ...



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Book 1





AN
ADDRESS
TO THE PEOPLE OF
NORTH CAROLINA,
ON THE EVILS OF
SLAVERY.

BY
The friends of
LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.

"Anne, liceat invitos in servitutem dare" DR. PICKARD.

"Not only the Christian religion, but nature herself cries
out against State of Slavery :—POPE LEO. X.

WILLIAM SWAIM, PRINTER.

Greensborough, N. C.

1830.

To the people of North-Carolina.

The Board of Managers of the Manu-
mission Society of North-Carolina in
General Association, feel in their indis-
pensable duty, respectfully to address,
not only their immediate constituents,
but with them, the people of the State
in general.

WILLIAM SWAIM, *Sec.*
Guilford, March 1830.

NICHOLAS MULLER,
PRINTER & STEREOTYPER.
48 Beekman-Street, New York.

NOTICE.

A respectable minister of Worcester, Mass. put into my hands, last year, a pamphlet, printed in North Carolina, in 1830, which he and others have so highly recommended, that it was deemed best to re-publish it, for circulation in that old and influential State, and in other Southern States, at the present time. It is well that the people of those States should know the sentiments of the generation that preceeded them, on the great and all-engrossing subject of American Slavery.

The pamphlet is re-printed in a style as similar to the original as could be done, considering how superior the paper now used, and the type, &c., are to those used thirty years since. It is printed exactly after the original edition, except that Professor C. D. Cleveland, of Philadelphia, has corrected some errors in the passage quoted from the writings of Cicero.

It is due to the cause of Freedom to say here, that the emancipationists of the present day do not agree with *everything* in this pamphlet; and it is quite probable, that if the author or authors of it were now living, they would have improved it according to the light that has been thrown upon the subject since its first publication. It is re-published, as a remarkable production emanating from a slave-holding State thirty years ago; and it is commended, not alone to the present generation in slave-holding States, but also to those Northern men, who fall far below the anti-slavery sentiment of Southern men in the year 1830.

Emancipationists in N. C. appear to have believed, in 1830, that slaveholding was an inherent sin, and did not trouble themselves with the inquiry, "Is it in all cases sinful? Is it a *malum in se*?" They believed it to be a sin—therefore to be denounced. Death to slaveholding—was their motto.—May God bless this pamphlet to the enlightenment of the country.

L. T.



ADDRESS, &c.

CAROLINIANS:

We believe it is generally known that a social institution has, for some years, been progressing, for “the *gradual abolition* OF NEGRO SLAVERY” among us: yet we are well aware that our precise views in relation to this subject are but partially understood. In the commencement of our investigations, we used the utmost prudence, knowing the irritable disposition of those, (and at that time many there were,) who, from want of reflection on the subject, felt, or seemed to feel their dearest rights invaded by the least attempt to examine into the policy or rectitude of holding the African race in a state of slavery. We proceeded then as we ought, with all possible caution & reserve; never venturing to discuss rashly, and seldom stirring the subject far abroad. We thought it not only advisable, but the only justifiable course, in the first place to examine, weigh, and deliberate profoundly within our own more immediate circles, the fundamental principles of the institution, and ascertain if possible, from the best human calculations, to what extent could our labours probably succeed, and what would be the probable consequences of giving unrestrained publicity to our doctrines, by circulating them generally throughout the country. All this we trust has

been done. We have taken a deliberate survey of this land of slavery. We have impartially examined the evil in its origin, its progress, and its present state, as well as its future consequences; and even in its mildest form, it shrinks from rational inspection—a monster of hideous deformity in its best feature.

We profess to have considered the matter on all sides, and to have made every due allowance for the peculiar situation of all parties, whether slaveholders, monster slaveholders, or slaves, and seriously, we cannot longer hesitate as to the course that our common duty, interest, and prosperity demand. Discussion has been too long delayed already, and is now rendered the more indispensable, as the evil to be removed is daily accumulating on our hands. And we are divinely admonished to “work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.”

Whatever the people of this State may be with respect to information on other subjects, on this they are very destitute, owing, we suppose, to the “*awful delicacy*” we hear so much about, and which we would briefly examine. Then what renders this subject so *awfully delicate*? Is it the incapacity of the people to investigate it? Is the discussion of this subject *delicate* because it favors the *innocent* and condemns the *guilty*? Is it *delicate* because it

shows republicans their inconsistency? Is it *delicate* because it accuses the professors of the Christian Religion of crimes which a Mahomedan would blush to commit? Is it *delicate* because it impeaches the right to hold human beings as property? Is it *delicate* because free men are ashamed or afraid for slaves to know that they incline to do them justice? If any of the above considerations are to restrain the rational enquiry of this community, farewell to manly enterprize in North Carolina! But we yet hope for better things. This is an age of active enterprize. A spirit of inquiry is partially awakened which no earthly authority or artful dissuasion can effectually restrain.

Under the protection offered by our Constitution in the 18th section of a Declaration of Rights made by the Representatives of the Freemen of this State, we now set out in a calm, and more full investigation of the evils consequent on the existence of absolute slavery. And as we cherish no unkind feelings toward any class of our citizens, but prompted by philanthropy and patriotism, we labour to expose inconsistencies, and to hold up to public gaze, and we hope to public execration, principles that tend to destroy our liberties, our morals, and even our souls; we hope that every man having an

opportunity to examine this subject with us, will do it impartially and honestly, in attending to, and investigating the following propositions :

PROPOSITION I. Our slave system is radically evil.

II. It is founded in injustice and cruelty.

III. It is a fruitful source of pride, idleness and tyranny.

IV. It increases depravity in the human heart, while it inflames and nourishes a numerous train of dark and brutal passions and lusts, disgraceful to human nature, and destructive of the general welfare.

V. It is contrary to the plain and simple maxims of the Christian Revelation, or religion of Christ.

After demonstrating these propositions we shall briefly state in conclusion, some of the most prominent features in the plan which we would adopt for the abolition of slavery.

PROPOSITION I.

Our slave system is radically evil.

The truth of this proposition is generally admitted, and it would be still more generally avowed were its pernicious effects less: For it is true that absolute slavery, while it tends to destroy the most virtuous principles yet remaining in man, by introdu-

eing into his heart, and cherishing there when thus introduced, the most hateful principles and passions which disgrace human nature, tends at the same time, to render him more destitute of a true knowledge of its enormity : as it proportionately effaces from his understanding those ideas of social order and reciprocal justice engraven on his mind by the God of nature. But as the remaining propositions are such as arise out of this, of which they are rather members than original propositions, we shall refer the reader for a further consideration of this subject, to the propositions which follow, where its various principles will be attended to.

PROPOSITION II.

Our system of slavery is founded in injustice and cruelty.

SECTION 1. *Of the injustice of absolute slavery.*

To demonstrate the truth of this proposition we shall attend to the terms "Injustice and cruelty" together with some of those circumstances which have attended the introduction and continuance of Negro-Slavery among us. And as *injustice* is the opposite of *justice* ; and as every act of social beings is founded either in *justice* or *injustice*, we need only examine the term justice, and try our slave-

system by its principles, since whatever is not according to the principles of justice, must necessarily be founded in injustice.—Justice, if we mistake not, has respect to the conduct of relation, and imports that he who acts according to its dictates, renders in a righteous manner “blessing to whom blessing is due, honor to whom honor &c,” and that too, without the least regard to *colour, rank, or condition*. And one very prominent feature in the administration of true justice, is, that it distributes rewards and punishments to such individuals separately and singly, as have merited the same, and that too in the same degree in which the acts as aforesaid have merited. Now if this be a faithful description of justice, is it not manifest that *Negro slavery* is founded in *injustice*? An unfortunate fellow-creature is kid-napped on Africa’s defenceless shore, and by a monster having the *form* and *name*, without any of the tender sensibilities of a *human* being, he is taken into a foreign land and sold into perpetual slavery, where he becomes at once the *serf* and the *slave* of a people (falsely termed Christians) whose conduct towards the poor negro, in many cases is such as would even cause

“*Mercy* * * * * to weep,

“ Should she such treatment rendered
 —————to a brute.”

“ And what MAN seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush
 And hang his head to think himself a MAN ?”

But still worse ! Should the unfortunate creature thus kidnapped and sold be a female, her innocent and helpless posterity are doomed to a like state of cruel bondage and suffering, for no other ostensible reason, than that of their ancestor being guilty of a **black skin!!* If it should be urged that many of the negroes originally brought from Africa were such as had forfeited their lives in their native country ; this, by no principle of *logic* amounts to a sufficient reason for passing the dreadful decree of slavery for life on their innocent offspring : which according to those patriotic veterans of 1776, the framers of the *Declaration of American Independence*, is a flagrant violation of the Law of Nature, & an unjustifiable encroachment on those “ *self-evident*” and “ *unalienable rights*” with which God has endowed all men.

* He [Man] finds his fellow guilty of a *skin*,
 Not COLOURED like his *own* ; and having power
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.

COWPER.

Nor will doctrine of the injustice of absolute slavery lose any of its real weight by the consideration of its having the sanction of the Law, if we consider that all men are but subordinate beings, who are held bound to obey their Creator according to his own Laws, which he hath ordained, and by which he designs his creatures to be governed, among which that denominated the Law of nature (which is nevertheless a divine Law) may and ought to be regarded as having been instituted for the particular purpose to which we now apply it, and to which it has been applied by men of sound judgment and uncorrupted principles in every age ; and to which it was particularly applied by the Fathers of our glorious liberty, as they have abundantly shown.* Nor dare any one doubt the validity of the Law of nature, any more than the right of its Almighty giver to a primary part in the government of mankind. It follows consequently that the principles set forth in the Law of nature for the government of mankind are *primary* or *constitutional* principles, and that the Laws enacted by men for their own government should harmonize with and acquiesce in them.

And as no authority can overreach that by which

* See Declaration of American Independence and also Bill of Rights.

the law of nature is established, therefore no human Legislature, how lawfully soever it may be constituted, can deprive any individual, (he or she being one of God's creatures, and under his government) of any of those "*unalienable*" privileges guaranteed to him or her in the law of nature, otherwise than they are personally forfeited by the individual or individuals from whom they are taken, without offending the great Governor of the universe. Such laws are therefore founded in injustice, and ought to be repealed without delay, as they oppose *divine law*, and as such, must be offensive to the God of nature, whose wrath we necessarily incur by suffering them to exist.

Nor is this doctrine of the law of nature a mere chimera — it is a reality of which every rational man may have the most satisfactory evidence, even in his own breast: for it is there that this doctrine is fully authenticated and established. It was there that the writer's address discovered this principle. And there can be no doubt but, that the Patriots of 1776 discovered the same principle existing in their breasts in a similar manner. And in like manner have good and Patriotic men in all ages discovered the same principle, in proportion as they received the aids of reason and revelation. *

* In further confirmation of the above, we transcribe the

And if any man, upon examination find not the same principles existing in his breast also, it is not because of any defect either in the law of nature or in his own original constitution : but it is because he has suffered the undue love of money, which is the "root of all evil," and pride the "mother of vice," to subvert these primary principles of justice and prosperity implanted in his mind by the God of nature, and thereby to turn nature out of her proper course, and by thus abandoning himself to avarice and selfishness, has introduced into his own heart such an assemblage of carnal desires and avaricious propensities, as in no small degree, to darken his understanding and deprive it of those ideas of social order and reciprocal justice which even exist in minds ex-

following noble passage of Cicero cited by Lectantius out of his work DE REPUBLICA.

"Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna ; quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat, quæ tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec abrogari fas est ; neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest : nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus ; neque est querendus explanator aut interpres ejus alius ; nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis : alia nunc, alia posthac ; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una

panded by wisdom and ennobled by virtue. Such being the dictates of human instinct — or to speak more correctly — such being the principles set forth in the law of nature, a copy of which is furnished in the breast of every rational individual, we are not surprized on finding them repeatedly set forth in the opinions and laws of men ;—thus we know them, not only in the Declaration of American Independence, and in the Bill of Rights, but in some way or other set forth in some part of the Constitution or Laws of perhaps every State in the Union. In the Constitu-

lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit ; unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus, ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator ; cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet ac naturam hominis aspernatus, hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiam si cœtera supplicia quæ putantur, effugerit." "From which it is clear" says Bishop Watson "that Cicerò acknowledged a Law antecedent to all human civil institutions, and independent of them, binding upon all, constant and perpetual, the same in all times and places, not one thing at Rome and another at Athens ; of an authority so high, that no HUMAN power had a RIGHT to alter or annul it ; having God for its author, in his character of universal Master and Sovereign, taking hold of the very consciences of men, and following them with its animadversions, though they should escape the hand of man, and the penalties of human codes" : here then is the LAW of nature fairly and fully apprehended.

tion of the State of Delaware, though a slave-holding State, they are fully set forth thus :—"Through divine goodness ALL men have *by nature* the rights of worshipping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their own consciences ; of enjoying and defending *life and liberty* ; of acquiring and protecting *reputation and property* ; and in general, of *attaining objects suitable to their condition without INJURY OF ONE TO ANOTHER.*" And a Declaration of the *rights* of the citizens of North-Carolina, which by the 44. *Section* of our CONSTITUTION, is declared to be a part of the *Constitution* of this State, says, in *Section 19* : "That ALL men have a *natural and unalienable RIGHT to worship Almighty God, according to the dictates of THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES.*" While other parts of the above mentioned Declaration of Rights, as well as some subsequent acts of the General Assembly, seem to show in a very high degree, the conflicting influence of humanity and prejudice in the Councils of N. Carolina The 22. *Section* of our Declaration of *Rights*, which as we have shown above, is a part of our *Constitution*, says that, "No hereditary emoluments, privileges, or honors ought to be granted or conferred in this State." And by a parity of reasoning it may and ought to be said, that "No *emoluments or privileges,*" the right to enjoy which, being vested in the individual or individ-

uals possessing them, by the law of nature, "ought to be taken away in any case, either in this or any other State in a hereditary manner." But are not both these rules violated in this State? The son or daughter, in this State, falls heir to all, or a proportionable part of the "*born sheds*" belonging to the estate of his or her Father; and that too without any bequest or other instrument of conveyance, except the mere provision contained in the Law of the state. And this principle of descent is a *hereditary* principle. Now if the circumstance of one man's holding another in absolute slavery, and of enjoying all the benefits of his sweat and toil, are "emoluments and privileges," then it must be granted that the "*hereditary* emoluments and *privileges*" conferred in this state are many, very many, notwithstanding the constitution of the state to the contrary. And our "*common law*," which is a primary ingredient in the "law of the land," mentioned in *Section 12*, of our declaration of rights, is said to be founded on "reason and the divine law," and is held to acquiesce in them in every instance, any former usage or decision to the contrary notwithstanding. The common law of this state, must therefore acquiesce in the provisions set forth in the law of nature, in all cases, when the "law of the land" is not

rendered otherwise by some statute or special act passed either by the General Assembly of North Carolina, or by Congress; and that too, according to the Constitution of our State or of the United States, as the case may be, since the law of nature is evidently a *divine* law, and as such, must be supposed to harmonize with all other laws of *divine* origine; as it would be absurd to suppose two divine principles, opposed the one to the other. The law of nature, the law of reason, and consequently the *common* law of this State, (as we have shown,) all declare liberty to be the "birth right" of every human being. Now it is a well known, and universally acknowledged point in law, that every man stands acquitted until the contrary appears in good and lawful evidence; or in other words that the Law *presumes* every man to be innocent, or clear from any alleged charge, &c. until the same be proved by good and lawful testimony. Let us then briefly examine our slave system with respect to this particular. There is one man claiming to hold another as his slave, which claim the alleged slave is not disposed to admit. Now in this trial for liberty, on whom should the weight of evidence rest? We answer — according to the above principle, it should *always* rest on the claim-

ant. This opinion is fully corroborated by the sentiments of the honorable George Wythe, one of the signers of the Declaration of American Independence, and since chancellor in Virginia; who laid down as a general position "That *whenever one person claims to hold another in slavery the ONUS PROBANDI* (burthen of evidence) *lies on the CLAIMANT.* This sentiment," he continues, "is strongly inculcated in our political catechism, the bill of rights, and accords with that self-evident principle which makes liberty the birth-right of every human being." Sentiments like these are honorable—they are the native sentiments of an uncorrupted understanding, and a mind superior to avarice and selfishness, &c. From the view we have taken of the subject, it follows that in the supposed trial for liberty referred to, the alleged slave has only to plead, (not to prove,) that he is a human being, born free according to the invariable law of nature; and that he had not, at any time, either forfeited or relinquished his title thereto. Now it devolves on the person claiming to *prov.* that the alleged slave is not a *human being*; that the law of nature does not entitle *every human being to liberty*, and that the alleged slave is *one* of those unfortunate creatures for whom it has made no gracious provision; or that he has personally forfeited,

or voluntarily relinquished his title thereto: which, should he fail to establish any or all of the above mentioned particulars, amounts to a sufficient *presumption* in favour of the alleged slave's liberty, and as such, he ought to have it. "Not so," say some of our law expositors, "our law *presumes* all Africans of the full blood, who may be claimed as slaves, to be such, until the contrary is proved," see *Gober vs. Gober* I. Taylor's reports, page 164, where this doctrine is laid down by the *Judge* in his charge. This being the case relied on by the advocates of slavery, for the establishment of the *presumption* of slavery founded on colour, we shall give ourselves, and our readers if they please, the trouble of examining the case itself, as well as the *profound* reasoning of Chief Justice Taylor on this occasion—

Gober *vs.* § — *Trespass and false imprisonment.*

Gober ¶ — *Plea, that the plaintiff is a SLAVE.*

"It appeared in evidence that the plaintiff, when *an infant*, apparently about eight days old, was placed in a barn by some person unknown; and that the defendant, then a girl of about twelve years of age, found him there and conveyed him home, and had kept possession of him ever since, treating him with humanity, but claiming him as her slave. The plaintiff was of an olive colour, between black and yellow, had long hair, and prominent nose." These

facts being ascertained by the Court, by proof and inspection, the Judge proceeded to give the following charge : " I acquiesce in the rule laid down by the defendant's counsel, with respect to the presumption of every *black* person's being a slave. It is so, because the negroes originally brought into this country were slaves, and their descendants must remain such until manumitted by proper authority. If therefore a person of this description should claim his freedom, he must establish his right to it, by such evidence as will destroy the force of *presumption arising from colour.*" But I am not aware that the doctrine of presumption against liberty has ever been urged in relation to persons of mixed, or to those of any colour between the two extremes of *white* and *black*, and *I do not think it reasonable that such a doctrine should receive the least countenance* : Such persons may have descended from Indians in both lines, or at least in the *maternal* ; they may have descended from a *white* person in the maternal line, or from mulatto parents *originally free* ; in *all* which cases the offspring, following the condition of the mother, is entitled to freedom. Considering how many probabilities there are in favour of the liberty of those persons, they ought not to be deprived of it *upon mere presumption*, more

especially as the right to hold them in slavery, if it exists, is in most instances, capable of being satisfactorily proved." Doubtless every true friend of liberty, will be found to acquiesce in the soundness of the views of this "*distinguished jurist*" in relation to persons of *mixed blood*; but we must candidly and fully dissent from the specious reasoning by which it is inferred, that every *black* person should be presumed to be a slave. We are convinced that no circumstance or consideration whatever, can render unqualified and absolute slavery consistent with that *instinctive* sense of *right* of which every man may find more or less in his own breast. But could any circumstance justify it in any degree, is it not still evident, that that circumstance cannot be *mere colour* of the skin, or even any other *natural* circumstance whatever. But says Judge Taylor:—"It is so, because the negroes *originally* brought into this country were *slaves*, and their descendants must continue such until manumitted by *proper authority*." Then the doctrine which *presumes* the existence of slavery, and which Judge Taylor would confine to negroes of the whole blood, is made by the same gentleman to depend, not so much upon the colour of the skin, as upon the circumstance of the "negroes originally brought into this country" being slaves. But we would ask by what means they became such?

Were they "*originally*" slaves? Or were they not "*originally*" robbed and plundered of their liberties and made SLAVES by *arbitrary means* contrary to all justice and propriety? We are not saying too much when we answer this last question in the *affirmative*; as we could abundantly show from authentic documents.* Having laid down his premises whereon to predicate the doctrine of the *presumption of slavery*, Judge Taylor proceeds to argue its *hereditary* principle, from the laws of necessity — "And their descendants," continues he, "*must continue slaves until manumitted by proper authority.*" We would regard it as no small favor to have this last phrase "*proper authority*," fully elucidated. We should be glad to know what ideas men in general, and learned men in their individual capacities as statesmen, politicians, &c. may have with respect to the "*proper authority*," by which the emancipation of slaves should be regulated. On this, how artfully soever some may reason, and how cautiously soever they may proceed, touching only such cords as vibrate with the greatest consonance to the tune of self-interest, we have no desire to conceal our sentiments. We believe that as all men are created,

* See Clarkson's History of the abolition of the SLAVE TRADE by the British Parliament.

equally and unalienably entitled to liberty, the *child of a slave* is as much entitled to his freedom at a proper age, as the *child of a free person*, and as such ought to have it. We hold that *laws* which determine the contrary are capitally *unjust*, and such as in truth no *human Legislature* has a just right to enact, since such laws must be opposed to the *will* of the Almighty Governor of the Universe, and his *will* must be *supreme*. And hence we believe that this *will* of the Supreme Being constitutes the only "*proper authority*" by which manumission should be regulated. On this subject we would say with *Plato*, that "No mortal can make laws to purpose" unless made in conformity with the divine *will*—that is, no human authority can give sanctity or justice to a law which violates the law of nature, or any other principle in the *will* of the Almighty ruler of the world. Such laws must therefore be a *curse* instead of a *blessing*, to those, by, and for whom they have been enacted. Neither are they sanctified by Judge Taylor's principle of necessity, since this great truth still remains, "*That which is morally wrong, cannot be politically right.*" (C. J. Fox.)

But to return to the subject after this seeming digression : — If Judge Taylor has proved any thing in favor of the *presumption* of slavery, his arguments

operate with as much *force* against those of the *mixed*, as against those of the *whole* blood ; and the *presumption* of slavery is as unreasonable in relation to Africans of the "whole blood," as it is in relation to any colour that can possibly exist between "the two extremes of *black and white*." For it is not only evident that "the negroes originally brought into this country" were "robbed and plundered" of their liberties, and deprived of them by the most glaring injustice and inhumanity ; but it is also true, that there has been heretofore, and still are, many Africans of the whole blood who are declared to be FREE, and for whose benefit and protection as FREE MEN, the power of government has been wielded whenever it has been thought by the ruling authorities, to be necessary. And further — it is an evident fact that much the largest portion of those of mixed blood are claimed and held as slaves, while by far the greatest number of those whom we call *free negroes*, are African descendants, of the full blood. The causes which conspire to produce this astonishing fact, are chiefly such as must be apparent to every person who has attentively considered this subject ; but being such in general, as tend to promote an unlawful intercourse between *white or free* males, and *female slaves* ; whether of the whole or mixed blood, more than they do a similar intercourse between

black males and *white* females, they belong more properly to *Proposition 4*, of this address, to which place we refer the reader for their further consideration. It is therefore inconsistent with sound reason, with the divine Law, and consequently with the common law of this State, thus to trifle with the natural rights of mankind, and with God the great and sovereign donor of those rights, by making the mere colour of the skin, amount to a sufficient presumption against a fellow creature's liberty, and this "*mere presumption*" the means of depriving him of it. Is this just? Does conduct like this comport with the dignity and virtue of a "*free, christian*" and independent community?" Let us hear what a former Legislature have said on a subject in some respects similar—In the preamble to an act passed in 1798, running thus: "Whereas, by an act of Assembly, passed in the year 1771, the killing of a slave, however wanton, cruel, and deliberate, is only punishable in the first instance by imprisonment, and paying the value thereof to the owner: which distinction of criminality between the *murder* of a *white person* and one that is *equally a human being*, but merely of a different complexion, is *disgraceful to humanity, and degrading in the highest degree, to the Laws, AND PRINCIPLES* of a *free, christian and independent*

COMMUNITY." Now if this "*distinction of criminality*" between the *murdering of a "white person"* and one that is "*equally a human being*" but "*merely of a different complexion*" is in reality so "*disgraceful to humanity*" and "*degrading to the LAWS AND PRINCIPLES of a free christian and INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY*"; is not any "*distinction*" founded upon the same circumstance, (the circumstance of *colour*,) more or less so, in proportion as it is made to affect the persons against whom it is exercised? And as next to *life, liberty* is the greatest earthly boon enjoyed by mortals, or rather as *liberty* is that alone which can render temporal existence *truly desirable*, what distinction therefore, founded upon "*mere colour*," can be more "*disgraceful to humanity*," and "*degrading*" to our holy religion, to our *virtue* and even to our *liberty itself*, than that which *presumes*" one man to be a *slave* and another to be *free*, their circumstance being in every respect the same, *except* in the "*colour of the skin*?" Neither can this doctrine of the *presumption* of slavery be supported by the *constitution* of this State. The 12, and 13, Sections of our Declaration of Rights declare "That no *free* man ought to be taken, imprisoned, or dis-eised of his *freehold, liberties, or privileges*, or outlawed or exiled, or in any manner destroyed or de-

prived of his life, *liberty*, or property, but by the law of the land ; ” and that when this in the case, the person thus deprived is “ entitled to a *remedy* by enquiring into the lawfulness thereof,” and asserts that “ such remedy ought not to be *denied or delayed*.” Now as this “ remedy ” is to be had by “ enquiring into the lawfulness thereof,” it is certain that nothing herein can be reasonably construed so as to favour the *presumption* against liberty in any case, but altogether the contrary. But notwithstanding this constitutional protection of the *liberties* of all *free men* within this State, yet when the doctrine of the presumption against *liberty* as laid down by Judge Taylor prevails, it jeopardizes the liberties and fortunes of hundreds of our citizens, many of whom are industrious and honest men.

Man-stealing has been received as a crime of great magnitude for nearly four thousand years ; and under some of the wisest and best administrations, has been punished with death. But should a wretched villian succeed in stealing a *free black* person in any part of the world, and in conveying such *free black* person within the limits of this State, the poor negro, instead of finding protection under our *human* laws, from the injustice of this relentless *canon*, is, according to Judge Taylor’s hypothesis, presumed to be a *SLAVE* by these very laws which were framed

to protect the *innocent* and punish the guilty ; while the wretch who is guilty of a crime for which he would have suffered death under the law of Moses, is not only protected from punishment, but also aided in the accomplishment of his ungodly and hateful purpose, by those very laws which were instituted to suppress violence and usurpation, and to encourage virtue and manly enterprize by protecting the rights, privileges, and liberties of our general citizenship. Surely it is both unjust and cruel thus to trifle with the liberties of our fellow creatures, especially as there can no inconvenience arise from the opposite doctrine. For as Judge Taylor remarks in relation to Africans of the mixed blood, so we may say of *all*, that "The right to hold them in slavery, if it exists, is in most cases capable of being satisfactorily proved." We therefore think, and we trust that every true Republican who may examine the subject, will think, that liberty, which is the *acknowledged* "birthright" with which God has endowed "every human being," ought not to be wrested from any individual upon "*mere presumption*." But whether it be consistent or inconsistent with the true principles and spirit of this government, and laws now in force in this State, to presume a person to be a slave merely because he has "a skin

not coloured like our own," will probably be doubted, notwithstanding it is proved to be contrary to reason and justice as well as to the divine Law, in as much as it was so held by Judge Taylor, whose decision was afterwards confirmed.* And this principle as we have shown, is a foul stain on our character as a free, enlightened, and religious people. And as the sovereign power in this government is vested in the people, who may and ought to have any regulation or change in their laws whenever a majority of them shall concur in the regulation or change required, we call upon the friends of humanity, of virtue, of patriotism, and above all, of religion, to awake to a sense, not only of this, but of the many principles of injustice, inhumanity and irreligion which attend our system of slavery; and to continue their protest against measures so *unjust* to the unfortunate African, and so disgraceful to the spirit and principles of a free and religious community, until we shall succeed in rendering to mankind (the *negro* as well as the *white* man,) both true and impartial justice; by which alone can glorious liberty be rendered perpetual, and we be enabled to transmit freedom as an unsullied patrimony to posterity.

SECTION II. *On the cruelty of slavery.*

* Vol. II Haywood's Reports, 170.

We have seen in the preceding section much of the injustice with which our slave system so plentifully abounds. Much as our sense of justice and social order have been shocked during the survey, and much as our just abhorrence of such measures may have been excited, we are *now* about to enter upon the investigation of a feature in our state economy where the finer sensibilities of our natures must frequently be put to the *rack* ! and where our warmest sympathies must surely be excited in behalf of suffering innocence in a manner much more overpowering than any thing we have yet witnessed in this *tragicul system* ! Now, as *injustice* is the withholding from a fellow creature, that to which he is entitled by the "*Magna Charta*" of his Creator, the law of nature, or some other laws in connection therewith ; so *cruelty* is the withholding of those acts of brotherly kindness and humane treatment from a fellow creature to which he is entitled — as a man and as a member of the great brotherhood of human beings. As *injustice* is the absence of justice, so *cruelty* is the absence of mercy ; and between these two last, *mercy* and *CRUELTY*, there is no vacuum : Every individual, as a *social* being, is either an object of the *mercy* or *cruelty* of others. He is either treated humanely, according to the dictates of kindness, by his fellow creatures, or he shares in their op-

pression, inhumanity and violence. To oppress a fellow creature, over whom we may have justly acquired an ascendancy, or whom misfortunes of any kind, may have sunk within our power, is of course *cruel*. And hence the cruelties connected with slavery are almost, if not altogether incalculable. To set this part of our subject more fully before the reader, we shall proceed to notice some of those circumstances of cruelty which have attended the introduction and continuance of slavery among us. And here our attention is first arrested by the slave-trade, which is of two kinds — foreign and domestic. The foreign, or African slave-trade, deserves first to be considered. And here, when we turn our attention to Africa, we see it, though naturally a fertile country, well adapted to agricultural and commercial enterprize, yielding to the withering and destroying influence of the slave-trade. Cantoned out into many separate nations or principalities, they wage intestine wars almost continually, for the purpose of obtaining prisoners of whom to make *slaves*, chiefly for the purpose of selling them to a people falsely termed *christians*, many of whom hold, at the very time that they are riveting their chains of cruel bondage on their brethren, that “all men are *created equal*,” and that liberty is the “birth-right of every human being.” But finding the poor deluded

African willing to sacrifice his brother to mammon—they resort to the most nefarious measures to excite him to this cruel act, by breeding wars and exciting feuds among them, by occasioning a necessity or exciting a desire for foreign goods, productions, &c. and then refusing to trade the same to them for anything except slaves. And the African, too often having no greater or higher desires than those of sensual gratification, and having, in consequence of being long inured to scenes of the grossest superstition and amazing cruelty, lost, or stifled in a great measure, those *native feelings* of humanity, which so distinguish the virtuous and the good, dares to sell his brother into absolute and perpetual slavery. And could we be present and witness this shameful traffic, as it has long been carried on there, what sorrow and disgust must it create in every philanthropic mind! We should there behold the merciless slave-traders, like greedy vultures hovering around the dreary shores of bleeding Africa. There we should see honour — justice — humanity — virtue — all proscribed, and cruelty and inhumanity going forth in all their dreadful forms to complete this wretched drama of human oppression and misery. There we should see troops of savages violently seizing and forcibly bearing away the most innocent and helpless objects, that might chance to fall

within their *grasp*. There we should behold the "stoutest hearts failing them for fear," the most proud and dauntless spirits of African greatness, sinking down appalled; and the most innocent and worthy, suffering all the indignities and hardships that can be supported or inflicted by human beings. And how must humanity bleed within us, while seeing a helpless fellow mortal thus seized and in a merciless manner hurried off in the midst of cries and entreaties sufficient to soften the most relentless heart in which remains any sense of humanity? O! what must be the agitation and apprehension of this unfortunate victim of human injustice and violence while he is hurried on to his fatal destiny! The thoughts of being parted from his native country, from his tender relatives, his father, his mother, or perhaps his affectionate wife and tender offspring, become almost insupportable to human nature, and at once awaken in his distressed bosom a thousand stings of the keenest and most painful sensibility. But when arrived at the place where the wretch who dares to purchase this object of human commiseration, has been waiting to receive his cargo of human cattle, he is disposed of in a manner which shocks all the finer feelings of our nature. Here he is immediately loaded with irons, and confined in the loathsome prison of a slave ship, where he soon

finds that even the "*tender mercies of the wicked are cruelties.*" It will doubtless be admitted by all that the conduct of the Africans in seizing, and making slaves of each other is highly culpable: But the conduct of those of civilized nations, who engage in this traffic is still more so, since they are found to sin against greater light and knowledge, and in a manner that is in no respect less criminal. Nor does it appear that the conduct of the African slave traders is in itself better or less cruel in any respect than that of the savage Africans. It is certain that they kidnap with as much cruelty when an opportunity offers, as do the African savages. But besides this there are other cruelties practised on these suffering mortals, by the African slave-traders over which, for the honor of human nature, we would draw a veil, did not justice demand that they should be made public? Having collected his cargo of suffering victims, and made the same *fast*, by means of irons &c. the merciless tyrant commences his inhuman expedition, laden with human misery, and distress. Alas! what must be the anguish of these *helpless*, and may we not say, truly *hopeless* beings while the unfriendly breeze is hurrying them far, far from their native land—the land of their fathers, with which they leave every earthly object calculated to cheer them or even to render life *supportable*.

Their miseries must at this time be intolerable, heightened, as well by the remembrance of former enjoyments now gone forever, as by the just anticipation of those inexpressible sufferings to which they will most likely be exposed through the remainder of their earthly career. But besides the horrors connected with intolerable servitude, there are miseries more insupportable and cruel than we can easily imagine, inseparably connected with confinement in a slave ship. Here we might see a brother suffering death in all the agonies of human woe, by the side of a brother, who in consequence of his own confinement can afford him no assistance, no not so much as to raise his sinking head, or wipe the tear that "stagnates in his eye." And of every cargo of these unhappy beings thus seized and confined, there are doubtless many whose wretched existence is terminated ere they reach the place of destination. But those who are enabled to survive the perils of the sea, as well as the horrific confinement and brutal treatment which they undergo in the slave ships, are at length brought into market, and sold like cattle, or in a manner no less brutal. And here these miserable creatures often fall into hands, that treat them the remainder of their days, with the utmost barbarity, working and beating them like oxen and feeding them but little better than dogs. By such

treatment as we have been describing, the sprightly and spirited African is soon reduced to a heartbroken, dispirited and miserable slave, almost *naked* and *starved*, moaping over some of our lovely fields, which seem silently to weep for the misery and oppression which they bear ; or perhaps groaning under the *lash* of some cruel master or overseer, while they often express the alarm and consternation which they feel on such occasions by a strange species of wild and haggard-like smiling, bordering on ghastliness. Here we behold them doomed to serve a people who are accustomed to look upon their whole race with a kind of contempt, exercising towards them an *obstinate prejudice* from which neither intelligence, virtue, nor religion has been found sufficient to screen them. Thus circumstanced they find themselves cut off from every means of bettering their situation.

The laws which exist respecting them, exist only to oppress them, without affording them any solid or real protection in any one instance, * as we shall presently proceed in some degree to show. But we proceed now to notice another abominable practice in this *traffic*, which is the domestic slave-trade. As though it were not cruelty enough to have touched every string of painful sensibility in the negroe's

* Vide Stroud on the slave laws

heart, by tearing him forcibly from his native Africa, he must still be held subject to a new trial of this kind whenever it may best suit the selfish and avaricious views of a cruel master, thirsting for gain or panting for cruel revenge. And if we have been accustomed to look upon African slave-traders with disgust, let us turn our attention homewards for a moment, and see if we have not among ourselves, men of similar character. We doubt not however, but many of those men engaged in the domestic slave-trade have been accustomed to regard African slave-traders as very depraved and cruel men ; and are very unwilling to rank with them, in point of character. But we hope they will do themselves the justice of entering calmly with us, into an investigation of the principles and nature of the domestic slave-trade, while we briefly contrast it with the African slave-trade, — And first :— We would ask what is the primary object of the African slave-trader ? Gain, must undoubtedly be the just and only proper answer to this question. Now permit us to ask the domestic slave-trader what is his primary object ? The same answer must invariably be given : gain. The desire of amassing wealth becomes the predominant desire ere he is *prepared* for this inhuman traffic ! Should the domestic slave-trader plead in extenuation of his conduct, that those ne-

groes whom he buys and sells, were slaves before he bought or sold them, and can only be such afterwards, and that in many cases their circumstances are really bettered by the exchange of masters which it has occasioned; all this will prove nothing in his favour, as it is the *principles* and *motives* existing in the heart, which, like main springs, exert a controlling influence over the man, in producing the actions of which we are speaking, and not the particular degree either of good or harm done to any individual thereby, which we are investigating.—But secondly: the African slave-traders obtain their subjects in any way that they can, without the least regard to the attachments or relationships either filial, parental, or conjugal, existing between the captured negro and those he is leaving behind him. In like manner the domestic slave-trader purchases his subjects wherever he can obtain the best bargains, without *any regard* * to the condition of the slave, in relation to any of the above mentioned particulars, and sells them again by the same rule. And although he does not crowd them down in the gloomy cells of a slave ship, yet he often loads the miserable creatures with irons in such a manner as to render their very existence burdensome. It may however, be objected

* There are doubtless some exceptions to this rule, but it is true in the main.

to the African slave-traders, that they sometimes kidnap and bring away those who were *free*, without paying an equivalent for them. Nor can we entirely vindicate the character of the domestic slave-traders from this disgrace of the human character, some of whom are at times too notoriously guilty of this abomination, as we could make appear were it necessary, with but little inconvenience to ourselves. And although the instances of kidnapping in the history of the domestic slave-trade, are much more rare than in that of the foreign, yet we believe, and facts authorize the belief, that few have engaged in the former, with a view of amassing wealth, but have shown a disposition to obtain slaves in any way which the laws and existing circumstances might permit. And it is a shameful fact that more or less, annually, of the *free* negroes, chiefly children, are taken and sold into slavery. From these facts it follows that, although the African slave-traders accomplish in some instances, more cruelty and inflict more injustice than the domestic slave-traders do, it is not because of any superior goodness of heart which the latter have more than the former; but it is because such cruelty and injustice are either unnecessary or impracticable.

The domestic slave-traders often sunder the strongest and most endeared ties of nature and destroy

every prospect of earthly enjoyment, which may have been left to the poor negro,

Negroes are *human beings*, and are capable of loving, and of being endeared to each other, especially in the tender relations of husband and wife, parent and child, &c. And the pleasures arising out of their relations, though very much alloyed by the existence of slavery, may nevertheless be enjoyed imperfectly even by the slave. But in consequence of this *traffic in human souls* they are often deprived of these last remains of earthly felicity, which, though enjoyed by them very imperfectly at best, are inexpressibly dear to them, as they constitute their entire store of earthly happiness. That we may perceive the heinousness and iniquity of our slave system in this respect, let us suppose a case — such a case as often occurs in the course of passing events. Here is a slave who, according to the best matrimonial rights existing in this country, with respect to slaves,* has vowed at the altar of Hymen, and is united to the woman whom he loves, and by whom he is loved in return, by many endearing ties. They entered piously and seriously into this union, and have been living chastely, and as far as could be expected, comfortable together. This union is rendered still more complete by the tender pledges of their mutual love,

* Such as they have instituted among themselves.

which are growing up before them. But they must part ; — Yes dearly as husband and wife, parents and children are connected together, they must now be sundered by a cruel master and a hard hearted purchaser. Here we must be struck, (it aught can strike us,) with the injustice which often attends *human laws*, while we witness a weeping husband ruthlessly torn from the tender embraces of a heart-broken and worse than a widowed wife ; parents in agonies of grief, taking a final adieu of their beloved children ; and children in return, bereaved of the parental superintendence of affectionate, perhaps praying parents, and thrown upon the mercy and faith of beings from whom they have nothing to expect but labor and oppression. And yet these objects of human commiseration are as we have said, human beings, — nay more — some of them are true believers in Christ, — legitimate members of his mystical body and heirs of his glorious kingdom. Let such therefore, as engage in the buying and selling of such slaves, with an intention to enslave them, or who holding them as property, exercise over them an unnecessary, and (as many do) an inhuman oppression, attend to our Saviour's declarations : "Inasmuch as we have done this unto one of these *little ones*, ye have done it unto ME." "Better for a man that a mill stone were hanged about his neck and he

cast into the depths of the Sea, than to offend *one* of these LITTLE ONES." But it may be asked, why do these things exist? Hath it not been said—"Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder?" Truly — But our law knows no such thing as marriage among slaves! This brings us to show what we before promised, that the laws of this State afford no solid or substantial protection to the slave in any one instance. This we shall briefly do, by laying down a few propositions, which we give as the true spirit and meaning of the laws now in force in this State. And first: — The laws of this State afford the *slave* no protection in his conjugal rights. This is evident, inasmuch as the law knows no such thing as marriage among them. And it is just, further to observe, that as there is no law to guard the sanctity of marriage among slaves, so there is none to restrain them from any of these abominations in this respect, to which they, in consequence of their degraded situation, are particularly prone. Hence adultery, fornication, polygamy, incest &c. are no violations of the law of this State, provided the same be committed among slaves only. And in the midst of the beastly, and the rude, we find the *chaste* virgin exposed to their capricious lusts, and rude assaults, without even the poor privilege of complaining; especially if the same

should have to be made against a monster who is *white*. O! shame, O! scandal to the *human* character. Secondly: the slave in North-Carolina, is not protected by law in his right in property, in any case: so express are the laws in relation to this particular, that should a humane master permit his slave to raise and claim "live stock," the property so raised and claimed by a slave, is liable to be seized and sold for the public benefit. Thirdly: Nor is the slave protected by law in his person. It is true, there are laws in existence in this State, with respect to this last, but in such a manner as to render them of no real advantage to the slave. Thus the law says, that, an allowance "of at least one quart of corn a day," shall be given to the slave. But it is manifest that the slave can have no redress, should even this small quantity be denied him: since the slave cannot, in such a case, *prosecute* his master or owner, or prove any thing in this matter, or in any other, against him, either by his own, or the evidence of other African descendent, to the fourth generation. And it is also true, that laws have been passed to prevent the murder of slaves! But if a wretch, being white, wishes to abuse, or even murder a negro, he has only to embrace an opportunity of doing it, when no *white person* is present. And a slave may, in certain cases, be even *lawfully killed*, (*viz.*) First: for

lurking in swamps, and pilfering in the neighborhood, being a *runaway*, a slave may be outlawed by any justice of the county wherein such *runaway* may be discovered, and may afterwards be *lawfully* KILLED *by any person*. Secondly: He may be *lawfully killed* in the act of resistance to his lawful owner or master. Thirdly: And where no such resistance is made, the *humane* laws of this State can find means of excusing or commuting the murder of slaves. In 1798, an act was passed to prevent the murdering of *slaves*, but lest this act should be found to impose too great a bar against the cruel abuse of slaves, the third section provides that the *penalty* which the act inflicts, shall not be incurred when the slave *dies* under "*moderate correction*." The law must be acknowledged lenient since the "*correction*" must be moderate." But to call a correction "*moderate*" which is sufficiently *severe* to produce death, is a solecism too glaring to require a criticism, and too *monstrous* for sober legislation. As in the above, so in all other instances; there must ever exist the same difficulty in the negro's obtaining, even that small degree of justice to which the laws *seem* to entitle him, so long as he is compelled to prove everything respecting the affair by *white* witnesses. And why is this the case? Why are *black men* prevented from giving evidence against *white men*,

while the latter have all the advantages of evidence against the former? Is it because the *black man* is a wretchedly depraved being, who will not speak the truth? Then why not say that men of this ignorant and depraved character whether *white* or *black* shall not be entitled to give evidence against men of a contrary character? Now our law very righteously determines, that no *atheist*, or person denying the existence of a *Superior Being*, and the *accountability* of man to the same, &c. shall be good evidence in any Court of Law, or Equity in this State. Our law-framers could not have been actuated by motives of the same kind, in fixing the fate of the Africans in this particular: since it is a fact which we presume, none, who admit the truth of revelation (and our law is founded on this *admission*;) that there are many *slaves* as well as *free* negroes, who are *conscientiously and devotedly religious*; while on the other hand, there are many examples of as desperate depravity among the *white*, as among the black population of this country. And further, there are among the *black* people, both *slaves* and *free* men, whose mere assertions would be received and accredited sooner by far, by their respectable neighbours, than even the oaths of many *white* men. And as the palladium of our civil institutions, is that of

trial by jury, no danger could be justly apprehended from the admission of their evidence in most cases; since they must always appear before a court under disadvantages; the prejudices of the jurors, court &c. most generally being against them, would prevent any undue difference being paid to their testimony. And the prejudices of education, which white people universally exercise more or less, towards the negro in this country, affords a conclusive argument in favor of this position. But before we dismiss this subject we would drop an admonition to such as are disposed to take advantages of the negro under the present existing laws, that they be careful how they act thus; since all the transactions of the present life will be reconsidered in a future Court, where Christ himself will be the Supreme Judge, (see Act. xvii, 31) and his Apostles and saints subordinate judges, &c., and where many of those on whom the law now imposes silence, will doubtless become the swiftest witness against you. Fourthly: One more, and we shall have done with this part of our subject. The laws make no provision for the education or moral improvement of the slaves; but rather the contrary: since they permit the master to exercise an exclusive *control* over the slave; who, in general, seems to think 'he has done enough, if he kept the slave

basily at work, without affording him any facilities by which to elevate himself in the scale of being, by devoting a portion of his time to the acquisition of learning and mental improvement. The truth is, the advocates of slavery have thought the best way of maintaining their dominion, was to keep these miserable creatures in ignorance. And a large portion of our law-framers being of this class, they have ever maintained a system of slavery calculated, in their opinion, to keep them secure in this respect. Hence learning, though in a very small degree diffused among the coloured people of a few sections of this State, may be said to be almost unknown to that race of beings in North-Carolina, where the sciences have been so long cultivated. Nor is the little instruction which some of them have received, and by which a few among the thousands of our coloured population, have been taught to spell, or perhaps to read in "easy places," in the least owing to any legal provision for the same: but solely to that CHARITY which "endureth all things," and is willing to suffer reproach, for the sake of being instrumental in "delivering the poor that cry," and in "directing the wanderer in the right way." And even *charity* with all her store of precious gifts must stand at a distance, and see thousands of precious souls die in ignorance, their minds a moral desert, benighted,

and wretched ; while sin, in all its deadly forms comes in to complete their ruin, without being able to afford them any assistance : provided such be the unrighteous will of the man who claims a title to property in these “human souls.” These things we hold to be improper in themselves, and highly displeasing to the God of Heaven, “who hath of one *blood* created ALL men,” for the express purpose of glorifying him. But is it not morally certain that the slave, if kept in ignorance, will be unable to glorify God in that degree, and to that extent, originally designed by his maker? Certainly it is : For while it is said that “The Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation,” and to furnish the man of God to “every good work,” it is also said that the “unlearned wrest these things to their own destruction.” But further, we contend that the withholding of mental improvement and moral culture from the slave is a robbery—a sacrilege against Heaven—against God himself : Because it deprives him of much service and adoration, which these ignorant creatures, aided by an education in letters, and moral as well as religious principles, might have rendered to him. Yet to our great mortification and the mortification of every true christian who has impartially thought on, and weighed this subject, we

sometimes meet with high-toned professors of religion who are guilty in this respect. "O tell it not in Gath, neither publish it in the streets of Askalon." May God vindicate his injured cause, and save our Holy Religion from such disgrace.

It will be in vain that any may attempt to conceal or extenuate these facts, or to make them appear in any respect less heinous than what is here represented. The Declaration of Rights says, that:—"Through *divine goodness* ALL men have a *natural and unalienable* right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences." Yet we must add that, 'Through *human injustice and oppression*, this "right" is substantially taken from the *slave*, and is vested in the *master*, who may *give or withhold*, in this matter (so far as it is possible for human authority to control it,) just as he pleases. "These things ought not to be;" and they are such as call for immediate redress.

PROPOSITION III.

Absolute slavery is a fruitful source of pride, idleness and tyranny.

This proposition is proved to be true by the common experience of mankind; and in a manner, too, that must force conviction upon every unprejudiced and observing understanding. But it may

nevertheless, be asked, when does slavery begin this mighty work in the human soul?—We answer, as soon as embryo reason begins to exert itself, it is, through this medium, perverted, and the little strength which it has acquired, is, by a wretched application, turned to its own destruction. The little child begins to view itself in contrast with its *black* associates; and while it discovers that these little creatures, as well as their fathers and mothers, are all destined to labour for *white people*, it imagines itself attached to a superior race of beings. And when grown a little larger, it finds these unwholesome ideas greatly strengthened by being permitted to *command* Tom and Bet to this or that, according as its whims or fancies may direct. These things dispose the heart to pride, and not unfrequently to tyranny itself. This disposition to “look down” on the part of mankind which does not possess the same advantages with ourselves, and which has been so successfully implanted in the minds of these little *masters* and *mistresses*, by a comparison of their own exalted worth with that of the degraded negroes, grows and strengthens with them. They next begin to compare themselves with the more humble and destitute of the neighbours, and find their own superior greatness more fully demonstrated: and the same

contempt which they cherish for the negro they now begin to cherish towards the white peasantry, lessening, however, in proportion as they advance from poverty and humble life towards wealth and affluence. It is here also, that the disposition to "grind the face of the poor," and to "oppress the hireling in his wages," so common among the wealthy, and by far too common with the middle classes of our citizens, receives its first impulse. The children of these parents who own slaves, and think, or seem to think it not amiss to *storm* and *drive*, with all the hurry and fury of which they are capable, learn to act in a similar manner. And it is a fact too well known (at least by the poor) to admit of successful controversy, that the man who will oppress and abuse his own slaves, will also when an opportunity is afforded, oppress his indigent neighbour, or any one else over whom he may have gained an advantage. This principle strikes at the root of our republican institutions, and if suffered to become sufficiently strong, would overturn even our liberty itself. But there is no alarming prospect at this time, of such principles getting to such a height among us, if they be timely and sufficiently opposed by the people, whose privilege and interest is to oppose them. Yet this much is certain, that by such principles as these, our fine gold has become dim, and much of our ri-

sing glory has been lost ! We might say much more on this subject, but as it may be necessary, in attending to the next proposition, to advert to some things primarily embraced in this, we defer their consideration until called up in support of facts more lamentable, yet not less true than those embraced in this proposition.

PROPOSITION IV.

Absolute slavery increases depravity in the human heart, and nourishes a train of dark and brutal passions and lusts, disgraceful to human nature and destructive of the general welfare.

Proofs of this proposition are abundant. We cannot long survey any one feature of slavery, without receiving some fresh confirmation of its truth. But we shall at present, detain our readers but a short time on a subject which must be such as to sicken the heart of the philanthropist, and to cause misanthropy itself to blush. To describe the gross ignorance into which nearly all our slave population are sunk—the deplorable corruption of morals, the natural offspring of such ignorance, everywhere seen among them, and these, like descending streams of destructive lava, bursting from the summit of this amazing mountain of human depravity, and extending its influence throughout our State, withering the

tenderest plants and blasting the opening flowers of human greatness wherever they come, throughout the various walks of society, would be a task of no ordinary undertaking. That the conduct of the master towards his slaves has, in general, a tendency to keep them ignorant and depraved, is a fact which must be admitted by all. And although there are some honourable exceptions, (blessed be God!) yet is it not true in the main, that slaves are grossly ignorant and depraved? Let a general examination into the character and morals of slaves, particularly in those parts of the State where they most abound, and where they are under the control of overseers &c. decide this question. And yet these ignorant—these depraved—these too-often vicious domestics were the *misses* of most of those whose fortunes entitle them, (at least in their own estimation,) to high distinctions among us, and who, having received their *first rudiments* among these intelligent slaves, (and that, too, doubtless, to the detriment of both their understanding and habits) think themselves entitled to sit at the helm of Government. If we consider how many of those who live on the sweat and toil of their unhappy domestics, who, relying on their wealth for their future success and enjoyments, grow vain and insolent, and while they neglect all useful business, look down with haughty

pride on the humble and laborious, supposing labor beneath the dignity of gentlemen—we say, cast a glance over the final destiny of the innumerable host that come under this description, and we are made to exclaim—How many thus sink down into insignificance, and whose very memories *rot*, who, otherwise, might have lived to the latest posterity, as monuments of human greatness ! How many such become the very nuisances of society, and are remembered by their enemies with execration and by their friends with remorse ! Reflections of this kind will lead us into a correct estimate, in this respect, of the evils of slavery. It is not necessary to mention the transcendant sin of intemperance, or the more extreme sin of theft and plunder, engaged in, too often, by those who are too proud to endure *poverty*, and too much the slave of indolence to labour honestly for a support. These evils which have spread so widely through our country, owe their origin more to the existence of slavery, either directly or indirectly, than to any one extreme circumstance whatever.

It is slavery that has rendered labour disgraceful, in so much, that to labour is to be like the *negroes* ; and it is slavery that gives idleness its charms, since the idler is, in this respect at least, like the *gentle-*

man.* To exemplify this fact let us contrast ourselves as a community, with those of the *free* States; there we see all classes work, without thinking it in the least disgraceful—There it is that *hirelings* are not afraid of working *like negroes*, as is too often the case with them in this country—there it is that the hale sons of Columbia enjoy the sweets of domestic life, while the labour which they undergo conduces greatly to the health, both of mind and body, and the establishing of the same in virtue. The “active mind of man” is seldom idle ; and when not in the pursuit of improvement, it is apt to fall an easy prey to some vice, which, when it has gained admission into the human breast, seldom ceases to triumph until it has fathered upon the individual all its kindred. It was not until the evil spirit mentioned in the scriptures, found the house “empty” (unemployed) that he was able to enter with “seven other spirits more wicked than himself :” so it is with idlers generally :—the Devil takes this advantage of them, first inflaming their desires of sensual happiness, vitiating their tastes and corrupting their minds generally, until he, by these means succeeds in

* It will be seen here that we speak not of true gentlemen, but of those useless property-made gentlemen who place that trust in wealth, which others place in rectitude of conduct.

leading his unhappy captives, first to the "shades of insignificance" and thence to the "mansions of misery." But we have not time to pursue this subject through all its labyrinths; we trust, however, that the contemplative reader will follow it out and supply whatever may be wanting.

We have said, that slavery *nourishes* a train of brutal passions and lusts, disgraceful, &c. In support of this part of our proposition, many considerations might be urged, one of which, however, must suffice for the present. We had occasion to remark, in a former part of this address, that the chastity of the female slave is not protected by law! No, not in the least! The most virtuous and chaste of this degraded race are daily exposed to the hateful lusts of the most incestuous, without the poor privilege of either defending or complaining against such diabolical treatment. The disgrace of such an outrage on virtue and the sacred rights of social order, we would fain, (for the honour of our country,) conceal, were it not proclaimed against us by the *tawny* skins of a numerous host of mulattoes, many of whom recognize among their masters, owners &c. the relations of fathers, brothers, sisters &c. yes: dreadful as it may seem, man *literally*

"Chains his brother and exacts his sweat."

And sure if angels ever weep at the follies and crimes

of men, it must be when thus employed. Amalgamation has been *professedly* deprecated by our legislators, and people generally, as one of the sorest evils that could befall us in this respect: and laws have been enacted to prevent *free* negroes from intermarrying with white people, while strange to tell, not one legislative effort has been made to prevent the abuse of female slaves, by whom, or under what aggravating circumstances soever the same might be offered. These circumstances, with others no less unfavorable to our moral and political character, make primary ingredients in that monument of our country's disgrace, which, unless it be demolished by the virtues of our present or succeeding citizenship, can only fall with our remembrance as a people, and not until the last laurel has dropped from our brow, and our last fading glory is extinct! We might enlarge on this painful subject: we might treat of the force of temptation, particularly when coming from a quarter to meet the cordial approbation of our natural passions and desires; and in the accomplishment of which no formidable bar is interposed. We might show how reason is here overpowered and dethroned; how the remonstrances of virtue, already decayed and emaciated, become vain and futile; how man, bent upon sensual gratification, rushes on, brutifies himself, inflames his passions but the more,

prepares himself for the practice of almost every vice, and at once submits to be carried by the current of his clamorous inclinations into the whirlpool of vice and dissipation ; but we forbear. Thus we have given a faint and very imperfect representation, which, it is believed, falls far below the reality ; but such a one as is by no means flattering, either to the wisdom or virtue of our country.

One remark more shall close our observations on this subject. If this be the nature of the case, is it not a matter of surprise that these things have not excited the attention of our legislatures before now ? Truly they cannot be ignorant of this evil ; but still they have *approved*, or at least winked at it. We are certainly entitled to enquire into the cause of this neglect. Has it been then, as they have said, "Because this subject needs no legislative interference ?" Facts the most incontestable declare the contrary. Has it been because the evil to be removed was one too great to be exterminated, either in part or in whole ? We think not. Has it been because the appeals on this subject have not been sufficient to elicit the feelings of humanity, and awaken the voice of justice ? surely not. Must we then conclude that there is not virtue enough among us as a people to correct even the grossest of irregularities ? And

are we not authorized to fear that the legislative functionaries among us, have designedly neglected this subject, lest by imposing any restraints on the licentious in this respect, they should also abridge their own enjoyments? CAROLINIANS! reflect on this subject! It is one that demands your attention. The evil here complained of has already ruined many of your sons? It is the hateful milder which tarnishes the virtue of many a promising American youth, and is the cause of more debauchery than all other causes conjoined! Let the *people*—the virtuous, the intelligent *people*, call “loud and long” for redress on this subject, until virtue triumphs over vice, and humanity over cruelty.

PROPOSITION V.

Slavery, absolute and unconditional, is no less contrary to the christian religion than to the dictates of justice and humanity.

It may seem superfluous, after having dwelt so long on the evils and miseries of slavery, to say any thing in relation to its anti-christian character; for if what we have said already be true, it must be apparent to all serious and sober thinking people that a system fraught with so much injustice and attended with so many pernicious consequences, cannot possibly be consistent with the simple and disinter-

ested truths of the religion of Christ. But the attempts which worldly-minded and selfish professors are daily making to reconcile slavery which Christianity, constitute our apology for detaining our readers awhile on this part of the subject. And here we shall *first* attempt to show that slavery is inconsistent with the Mosaic or Jewish policy; and *secondly*, that it is contrary to the most obvious duties and requirements of the teachings of Christ.

First. We have said that slavery was inconsistent with the Mosaic or Jewish policy. It is true that a *species* of slavery existed among the Jews, both before and after the giving of the law, but the rigor and perpetuity which characterize our slave-system was not tolerated among the Jews; nor was the servitude known among that people of that absolute nature, practised. No Hebrew was at liberty to continue a Hebrew whom he had purchased longer than *six* years against his will. Thus in *Exodus XXI chap. 2, 3, ver.* it was admitted that in such cases the servant should "serve" his master "six years" and the "seventh" he should go out free. In *Deuteronomy, XV chap. 12, ver.* the same principle is recognized, and applied to Hebrew servants, both male and female; and here also they are declared to be free on the seventh year. And in the last paragraph of the *XXXIV chap. of Jeremiah,*

we find God by the mouth of the prophet, reiterating this sacred statute, censuring the Jews in the highest degree for not observing it, and threatening to visit them with *sword, famine &c.* and to scatter them among all nations for such disobedience.

The principal causes of slavery among the Hebrews were, *First*, poverty which obliged them to sell themselves. *Leviticus* XXV. 39, and *Secondly*, the commission of theft for which they were not able to make amends. *Exod.* XXII. 3. And from the example of the widow, whose oil Elisha multiplied, it seems that the demands of creditors extended to the enslaving of the children of insolvent debtors. *II. Kings* IV. 1. In all this we find nothing to justify the slavery that exists among us, which has been marked with cruelty in every period of its existence. Those Hebrews servants, or slaves, were not only entitled to go out *free* on the seventh or *sabbatical* year; but if they were not then disposed to leave their wives and children, and make use of the privilege, "they might claim their *liberty* and that of their children, in the *Jubilee*, or *fiftieth year*." *Lev.* XXV. 40. But it is alleged that besides this enslaving of Hebrews by Hebrews, "there existed another species of slavery among the Jews, a species of slavery which fully justifies the system now existing among us." To this allegation, we reply—*First*,

that it is very uncertain whether this allegation be founded in truth or not,—and *Secondly*, if it is, it proves nothing against our argument in the present instance.

First then, we contend that the allegation is itself founded in doubt, or uncertainty. God's covenant with Abraham and with his seed after him was, that they should duly circumcise every male among them, as well him that was bought with money of any stranger, as he that was a native descendant of Abraham. *Gen. XVII. 10—12.* Jewish commentators agree that this command was strictly construed and faithfully practised. Thus it is said by *Maimonides*, "Whether a servant be born in the house of an Israelite, or whether he be purchased from the brethren, the master is to bring them both into the covenant. But he that is born in the house is to be entered upon the *eighth day*, and he that is bought with money on the day on which the master received him, unless the slave be unwilling. For, if the master receive a grown slave, and he be unwilling, his master is to bear with him, to seek to win him over by *instruction and by love and kindness*, for one year, after which should he refuse so long, it is forbidden to keep him longer than the winter months, and the master *must send him back to the stranger from whence he came*, for the God of Jacob will not

accept the worship of any other than a willing heart." And by a comparison of *Genesis*, Chap. XVII. Verse 10, with *Romans*, Chap. IV. Verse 9—12, it is certain that those who receive the right of circumcision were consecrated to the service of the true God.* And these circumcised strangers were called by the Jews, proselytes of justice, because they embraced the whole law of Moses, and engaged themselves to live holy and justly. "And they, therefore," (says the learned and the pious Claudius Florinus, in his celebrated treatise on the manners, customs, rights, &c. of the ancient Israelites, pag. 129) "had the rank and privilege, of *Natural Jews*." This sentiment is also corroborated by the learned Mr. Horne who says, "although the constitution of the Jewish polity, and the laws of Moses allowed no other nation to participate in their sacred rites, yet they did not exclude such as were willing to qualify themselves for conforming to them."

From the above considerations, and others that might be adduced, it is propable that the slaves which were bought of strangers and afterwards became circumcised, enjoyed all the privileges of enfranchisement, especially in the year of Jubilee: for St. Paul says of such, that they were "debtor to do the

*Horne's Introduction to the critical study of the Holy Scriptures.

whole law." And surely if they "must do the whole law," they, in turn, would reap the benefits conferred by the law. This opinion is generally strengthened by the command of *God*, in *Lev. Chap. XXV.*

Verse 10— "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth, and proclaim *liberty throughout all the land*, unto *all the inhabitants thereof*: and it shall be a Jubilee unto you; and ye *shall return every man* unto his possessions, and ye *shall return every man* unto his family." But since there are some authorities which favor a different hypothesis with respect to the nature of that slavery into which strangers were brought by Jews, we shall leave, as all who duly weigh both sides of the subject must leave it, in a degree of doubt and uncertainty; for as Mr. Stroud has justly remarked: "it is a subject not to be discoursed on with the freedom of ordinary criticism, and on which there is an obscurity which leaves the mind unsatisfied."

But suppose we give up the ground altogether, and let the friends of slavery have the advantage of the position they have taken in this respect, instead of deriving any support from this circumstance, their cause is rather weakened, since we, being Gentiles, should, by the same rule, act towards Gentiles as *Jews* did towards *Jews* similarly circumstanced. "The only legitimate inference, therefore, which,

in a comparison with Mosaic regulations, analogy furnishes, is, that *our* conduct to slaves should be the same as was the conduct of Israelites to *Hebrew* slaves.

Secondly. If slavery be inconsistent with the Mosaic or Jewish polity, it is still more so with the precepts of Christ. The Mosaic dispensation was, in some respects, a dispensation of *bondage*, but the Christain or gospel dispensation, is in every respect, a dispensation of *liberty*. The *genius* of the gospel is "*mildness, gentleness and brotherly kindness,*" &c And the great and ruling maxim by which Christ would have his followers to regulate their conduct is this: "All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." This rule is applied in reference to our conduct towards *all* men. And in addition to this, or rather by way of enforcing it, we are commanded by Christ, to "be merciful, as our heavenly father is merciful;" and St. Paul has enjoined the doing of good to all men. On these plain scriptures, the sense of which is too plain and obvious to be overlooked by any devout seeker of truth, we think it entirely unnecessary to offer any comment. Surely no serious and sober-thinking christain will, with these scriptures, and a thousand others of similar import, before his

eyes, attempt again to reconcile *slavery* with *christianity*. No, brethren; — if you find your hearts to be evil, by unjustly and unmercifully enslaving your fellow creatures; by living in pampered ease and affluence on the labors, toil and sweat, or may we not say, the "*flesh and blood*," of the poor African, do not insult the common sense of mankind, and put that religion which you profess to love, to the *blush*, by prostituting the mild and gentle doctrines of the gospel to the support of a principle and practice which shock every native idea which mankind have of natural and universal justice! May the spirit which inspired these holy men of old, who wrote the sacred text as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, save us from "wresting it thus to our own destruction!"

The following principles, most of which are deducible from the foregoing remarks, we give as the primary principles held by us as a Society — together with a brief outline of the plan which we would adopt for the abolition of the evil complained of: and

First. We hold, with the venerable founder of our republican institutions, that liberty is the *unalienable birth-right* of every human being; and that God has made no difference in this respect between the *white* and *black*.

Secondly. We believe that, in a national and individual point of view, the negro is entitled to the same measure of justice with the white man, and that neither his skin, nor any other material consequence attending him, can afford a reasonable pretext for his oppression.

Thirdly. We believe that the evil is one which affects every part of the community, in a greater or less degree; and may therefore be termed a national evil; and that both emancipation and colonization are necessary to its removal.

With regard to emancipation, we hold 1st, that it should be gradual; so conducted as not to interfere with the rights of property; — But 2ndly, that it should be universal. This however, is not enough. — The debt which we owe the negroes is not sufficiently paid by merely suffering the oppressed to go free. We believe it to be the duty of our countrymen, to use all possible means to enlighten and elevate the minds, ennoble the hearts, and improve and elevate the character of the negroes among us, that they may be prepared both to enjoy and appreciate liberty, and to discharge the important duties assigned them by their creator, as well to himself as to their fellow creatures, with honour to God and benefit to mankind.

In order to remove this alarming evil which is threatening in its aspect, and which if continued long enough, must be so destructive in its consequences, we would recommend the following :

* *First.* Let a law be enacted, preventing the further introduction of slaves into the State for sale or hire.

Secondly. Let a law be enacted, facilitating individual emancipation, by allowing such masters as wish to liberate their slaves, to do so; provided the liberated slave be capable of earning a comfortable livelihood.

Thirdly. We would recommend a law to facilitate individual emancipation still further, by authorizing negroes to make contracts with their masters by which they may purchase their own freedom.

Fourthly. We would recommend the passage of laws imposing still further restraints upon the abuse of slaves, and affording the unlawfully abused slave, at the same time, easy means of redress.

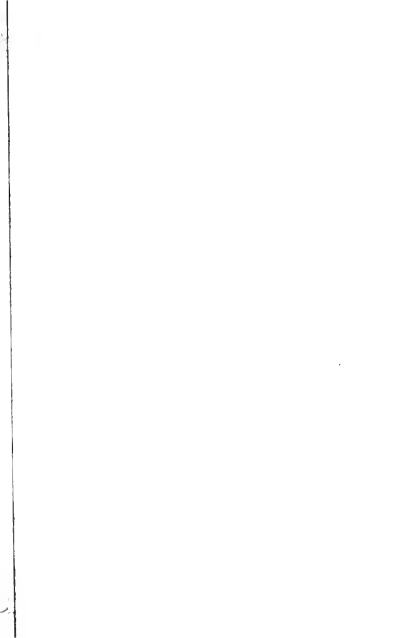
Fifthly. We would recommend a law providing for the instruction of slaves in the elementary principles of language, at least so far as to enable them to read the Holy Scriptures.

Sixthly. We would provide by law that all children in this State after a certain period, should be free at a certain age; and from and after the passing of said act, no negroes should be removed from the State in such a way as to lose the benefit of said act upon their posterity.

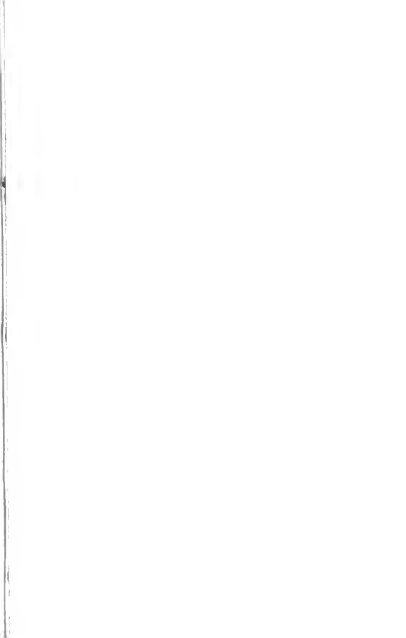
FINIS.

The committee appointed by the General Association of the Manumission Society of North - Carolina, to draw up an address to the people of the State, and to report the same to the Board of Managers of the said Society for publication, respectfully report the forgoing.

AMOS WEAVER, *Chairman.*







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